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RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL OR ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

Afghanistan*, Argentina, Austria, Belarus, Brazil, Chile, Croatia*, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia*, Ethiopia, Finland*, Hungary*, Mongolia*, Nicaragua, Norway*, Poland*, Portugal*, Romania*, Russian Federation, San Marino*, Slovakia*, Slovenia*, Sweden*, Switzerland*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* and Ukraine: draft resolution

1997/... Rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, as well as subsequent resolutions of the Assembly on the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities,

Considering that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to political and social stability and peace and enrich the cultural heritage of society as a whole,

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* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Concerned by the growing frequency and severity of disputes and conflicts concerning minorities in many countries, and their often tragic consequences, and that persons belonging to minorities are particularly vulnerable to displacement through, inter alia, population transfers, refugee flows and forced relocation,

Acknowledging that the United Nations has an increasingly important role to play regarding the protection of minorities by, inter alia, taking due account of and giving effect to the Declaration,

Recalling its resolution 1995/24 of 3 March 1995, in which the Commission, inter alia, decided to authorize the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to establish, initially for a three-year period, an inter-sessional working group consisting of five of its members, to meet each year for five working days in order to promote the rights of persons belonging to minorities,

Taking note of resolution 1996/17 of 29 August 1996 of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, in which the Sub-Commission recommended that the Commission request the Economic and Social Council to authorize the extension of the mandate of the Working Group on Minorities with a view to its holding one session annually,

Taking note also of the invitation by the Sub-Commission to the Working Group to increase its cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with a view to strengthening his preventive activities and enhancing his responses to minority situations warranting urgent action,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (E/CN.4/1997/82), as well as of the reports of the Working Group on Minorities on its first and second sessions (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/2 and E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/28);

2. Reaffirms the obligation of States to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law in accordance with the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities;

3. Urges States and the international community to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as set out in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons

Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, including through the facilitation of their full participation in all aspects of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of society and in the economic progress and development of the country;

4. Also urges States to take, as appropriate, all the necessary constitutional, legislative, administrative and other measures to promote and give effect to the Declaration;

5. Recognizes that respect for human rights and the promotion of understanding and tolerance by Governments, as well as between and among minorities, including through programmes of human rights education and public information, are central to the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minorities;

6. Calls upon the Secretary-General to make available, at the request of Governments concerned, qualified expertise on minority issues, including the prevention and resolution of disputes, to assist in existing or potential situations involving minorities;

7. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue his efforts to improve the coordination and cooperation of United Nations programmes and agencies which deal with minority issues in activities related to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities;

8. Calls upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote, within his mandate, the implementation of the Declaration and to continue to engage in a dialogue with Governments concerned for that purpose;

9. Calls upon States to continue to include in their reports to human rights treaty bodies, in accordance with the relevant conventions, information on measures taken for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities;

10. Calls upon all special representatives, special rapporteurs and working groups of the Commission to continue to give attention, within their respective mandates, to situations involving minorities;

11. Commends the role of the Working Group on Minorities of the Sub-Commission as an important forum for consideration and possible resolution of problems involving minorities;

12. Expresses its expectation that the Working Group will continue to carry out its mandate as set out in Commission resolution 1995/24 of 3 March 1995, with the involvement of a wide range of participants;

13. Calls upon States, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to participate actively in the work of the Working Group, including through written contributions;

14. Invites the Working Group to submit, through the Sub-Commission, a comprehensive report on its work to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session for the consideration of the extension of its mandate;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its fifty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

16. Decides to continue consideration of this issue at its fifty-fourth session under the same agenda item.